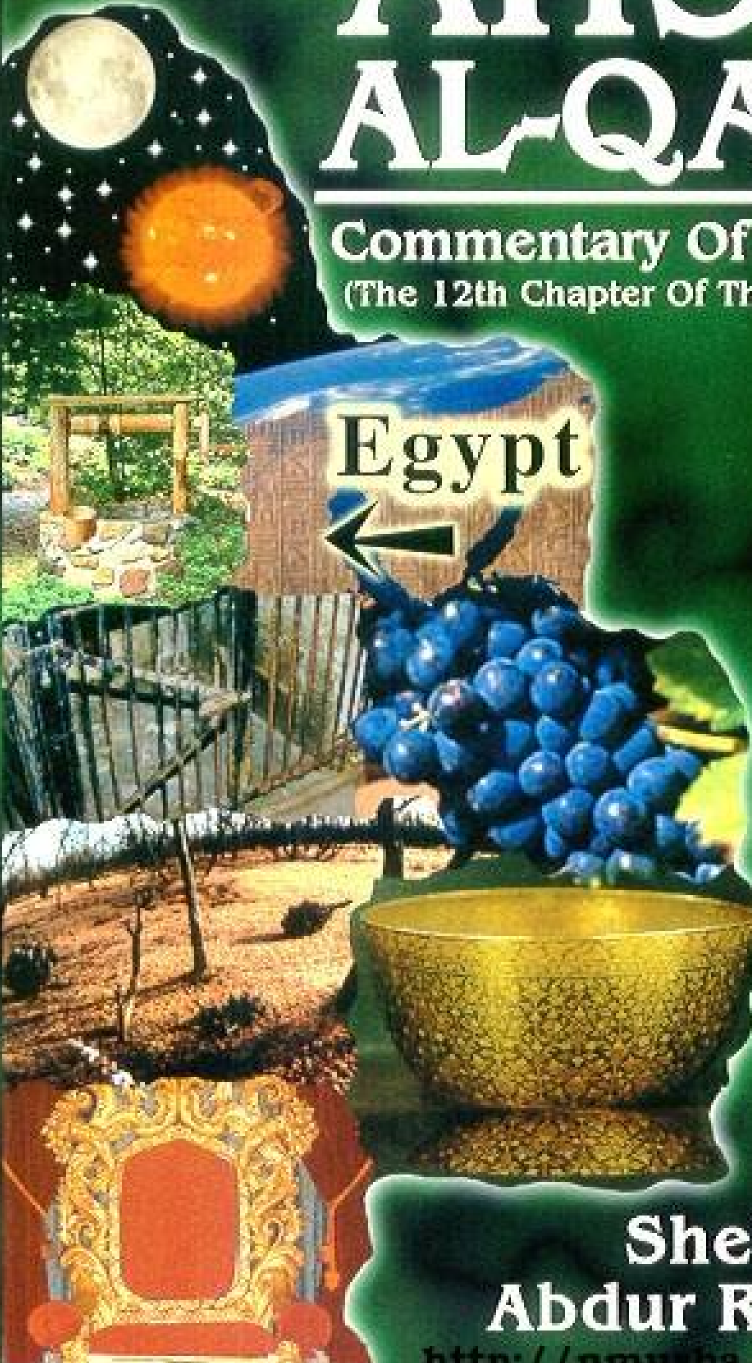
AHSAN AL-QASAS

Commentary Of Surah Yusuf

(The 12th Chapter Of The Glorious Qur'an)



Sheikh
Abdur Raheem

The mention of the name Yusuf normally makes one recall the story of the great Prophet of Allah, Yusuf عليه السلام. His detailed mention in the Qur'aan, in a chapter under the same name, holds host to a whole range of lessons, meanings and emotions waiting to be embraced by the keen of mind. This is Surah Yusuf a mark for all mankind.

This book attempts to bring the meanings and deeper interpretations of this Surah to the doorstep of the reader. While maintaining the authenticity of sources, this commentary unveils the story of Yusuf عليه السلام as well as opens the door to many sub-topics buried within the Surah. Dreams and interpretations, slavery, kinship and forbearance are some of the insights brought to light for the benefit of the reader.

This book is an enlightening and educational reading for one seeking a comprehensive understanding of an aspect revealed in the Islamic scripture, the Holy Qur'aan.

SUBULAS SALAAM PUBLICATIONS

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Preface

By Hadhrat Aqdas, Sheikhul Mashaikh, Tutor of all, Founder of Madaaris, Lecturer of Sahih Al Bukhari, Hadhrat Maulana Abu Sulaiman Yusuf Ibn Sulaiman Motala sahib, may Allah bless us with his company and grant him a long life. Ameen.

Translation by Sheikh Mahmood Chandia

PREFACE

In the name of Allah the most compassionate the most merciful

The dearest Moulana Abdur Raheem Sahib, lecturer in Hadith in Darul Uloom, Bury, (*may Allah protect him*), requested me to provide a preface for his current work, an exegesis of Surah Yusuf. This surah comprises multiple disciplines of study, such as astronomy, geography, mineralogy, sociology, etc.

The sciences of the noble Quran are a limitless ocean and a manifestation of the quranic verse:

Say: If the ocean were ink (to write out) the words of my Lord, then surely, the ocean would dry up before the words of my Lord finished, even if We brought another similar ocean for its aid. (Q. 18: 109)

At the beginning of the surah the following introductory information is contained. The words *al-kitab al-mubin* ('the Manifest Book'), provide the name of the Book. The words *inna anzalnahu* ('indeed We have revealed it') reveal the source of the Book. The words *quran 'arabiya* ('Arabic Quran') introduce the Book. The words, *ahsan al-qasas* ('the most beautiful of stories') indicate a specific chapter title. Likewise the quranic words *la taqsus ru'yaka* ('do not relate your dream') supported by the hadith 'do not relate a vision except to a boon companion or intelligent person purport etiquettes of the science of dreams and their interpretation. The words *fayakidu laka kayda* ('otherwise they will concoct a plot against you') substantiate the presence of men of esoteric knowledge unto whom information is disclosed and future eventualities become unveiled and that the articulation of such knowledge should not be held as improper. The words *wa kadhalika yajtabika rabbuka* ('and your Lord will choose you') indicate the science of disclosures and character judgement. Effectively, each word seems to unfold a body of knowledge that the reader of this work would become acquainted with.

I supplicate to Allah that may He establish this work as a source of benefit for

the author, its readers and all who assist in the printing and publication of it.

This surah, as I have previously stated, contains information about situations that both the people of distinction and the masses confront in their worldly lives. It exposes the hidden jealousy of Prophet Yusuf's brothers towards him and his subsequent separation from his father, Prophet Ya'qub (peace be upon him) who virtually lost his eye sight due to a lifetimes longing for and remembrance of his beloved son. This raises the question: what impact did this separation have on the mother? Likewise how did the late Hadrat Moulana Islamul Haqq Sahib (ex-Shaykh ul-Hadith of Darul Uloom, Bury) and his wife, who were also separated from their son during his infancy whilst residents amongst a Hindu community in India, live out the remaining thirty five years of their lives? The Prophet Ya'qub (peace be upon him) however was eventually repatriated with his son during the latter part of his life whilst the latter was the Governor of Egypt. He, at this point, was also informed of the lengthy sequel of events, which characterised his son's life. This includes the period of his son's infancy, enslavement and of course the extent to which Zulekha and other Egyptian women were infatuated with him. All of which is recorded in great detail in the Quran.

This infamous infatuation has produced numerous narratives in various mediums.

My name is also Yusuf and approximately 25 years ago I had occasion to stay in Egypt for a short while. A few months ago, I related to Moulvi Irshad, the Imam of Howard Street Mosque, Bradford an anecdote of an Egyptian Zulekha prior to his departure to Egypt for marital purposes. The anecdote is as follows:

When I was just over twenty-five years of age, I resided in Egypt for a short while. I lived in a flat that was situated on top of a meat shop on Majlis al-Sha'b Street in Cairo. This was between the Laghirigli and the vegetable market. I attended a local Mosque, which was located slightly off the main road on a side street, for the five daily prayers. At the mosque I became acquainted with three people who would accompany me during their spare time. The three were: Muhammad Yusuf al-Zafzaf an extremely courteous person, Midhat a tall and slim individual and Mustafa an exceptional football player. On one

occasion I arranged their collective names in a verse of poetry and recited it in their presence. They were all exceedingly charmed by the verse and commented that it resembled Al-Hariri's *Maqamat*. The verse was:

مَدَحْتُ مُحَمَّدًا الْمُصْطَفٰى

I eulogised (*madh*) Muhammad the chosen one (*al-Mustafa*)
All three regularly visited me at my flat after the Asr prayer and occasionally I would call upon them at their residence.

On one instance, Muhammad invited me to his house for a meal after Isha. I noticed on arrival that extra special attention had been paid to prepare the meal. We indulged in conversation in the presence of his parents and other members of his family in the courtyard of his house. At one point, Muhammad and Midhat took me to a room inside the house where Muhammad's sister, Zulekha, was also present. After a short conversation, Midhat, pointing towards Zulekha and acting in the capacity of her agent, informed me 'I marry her to you'. In a moment of urgency, failing to gather the fortitude within me to make an absolute decision on a matter of paramount importance, I found myself unable to deliver a positive response and considering rejection of the proposal impolite, I remained silent but smiling. On the one hand, both Muhammad and Midhat articulated their anxiety and on the other Zulekha despite the open doors attempted to convince me هَيْتَ لَكَ 'oh come on' by her despairing eyes, despondent appearance and the lines of her forehead and she was in fact a personification of the verse وَ لَقَدْ هَمَّتْ بِهٖ 'and indeed she did desire him'. But despite my vibrant youth and all impediments of protocol and religion being non-existent, and without witnessing any clear proof (as contained with in the surah) the quranic verse وَ هَمَّ بِهَا 'and he desired her' did not manifest. I did periodically regret this.

My Shaykh, Hadrat Shaykh ul-Hadith Moulana Muhammad Zakariyya (may Allah have mercy upon him) would remark that a hadith instructs us to abstain from wilful want of others possessions and not to reject an offering made without an expression of interest otherwise that offering could remain elusive even upon request.

I experienced a similar scenario. Zulekha and her family extended a marriage proposal with the utmost reverence, courtesy and according to the Islamic guidelines, but I did not oblige.

As a consequence of leaving Zulekha heartbroken, when I intended to re-marry at the age of fifty, twenty five years after the above incident, I continued to hear the echo of her broken heart in the presence of Muhammad and Midhat with two streams of tears flowing freely from her eyes. I would also find myself uttering with distress: يَا حَسْرَتَنَا عَلٰى مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِيْهَا 'Oh my loss due to forsaking her' and supplicating in favour of Zulekha, Muhammad and Midhat. On occasion this would be supplemented with the petition of Prophet Yaqub (peace be upon him) وَ اللّٰهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلٰى مَا تَصِفُوْنَ 'Allah is the One whose succour is sought' (Q. 12:18). Eventually my atonement and continuous supplications overwhelmed the bitterness of Zulekha's broken heart and my heart's aspirations were fulfilled.

At present, the invocation of Prophet Yusuf (peace be upon him) remains on my tongue:

رَبِّ قَدْ اٰتَيْتَنِىْ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِىْ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
اَنْتَ وَلِيّٖ فِى الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ

'My Lord! Indeed You have bestowed on me sovereignty and taught me the interpretation of dreams. Oh Creator of the heavens and the earth, You are my Protector in this world and the Hereafter.' (Q. 12:101). But it fails to continue with the words تَوَفَّنِىْ مُسْلِمًا وَّ اَلْحِقْنِىْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ 'Grant me death as one submitting to Your Will and let me be from amongst the righteouses due to the infancy of my children, Muhammad and Sulayman.

My ardent aspiration remains that may Muhammad and Sulayman develop into complete personification of Prophet Yusuf, Prophet Yaqub and their successor Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all) and I, in my final moment, utter with ultimate contentment 'Grant me [Oh Lord!] death as one submitting to Your Will and let me be from amongst the righteous.'

(Hadrat Moulana) Yusuf Motala (Sahib)

Foreword

By Sister Aatika Bora

Foreword

Surah Yusuf is a tale of many contradistinctions of love and longing and patient forbearance in the face of loss. It provides a compelling account of the Divine reward for patient endurance. This Tafseer is a powerful antidote to the modern values of instant gratification that Western Muslims in particular, aspire towards.

The lesson of Surah Yusuf is inspiring. The excellence of Prophet Yusuf's ﷺ character shows that lasting contentment comes through obedience to Allah. The trials that Prophet Yusuf ﷺ experienced, were born through his dignity and compassion.

Allah grant us the strength to fulfil our devotions by aspiring to the beauty of Prophet Yusuf ﷺ. May the love that he had for his family visit the reader and inspire him with the greater love for Allah and His Messenger ﷺ.

Allah bestow Maulana Abdur Raheem with renewed success in similar endeavours and reward him handsomely for enriching the reader with his knowledge.

Aatika Bora
27/4/02

Foreword By The Author

When my Sheikh, Hadhrat Maulana Yusuf Motala Sahib (May Allâh give him a long and prosperous life) initially requested me to write the Tafseer of Sûrah Yusuf for our monthly magazine, Subulas Salaam, I was taken aback in surprise and awe, for I considered myself neither qualified, nor worthy for the undertaking. However, since one's parents and teachers are constantly stressing the virtues of respecting the wishes of one's elders, I conceded to the request before me, and took upon to writing the Tafseer.

At the inception, the weight of the responsibility dawned upon me. Having to prepare for my lessons throughout the week, as a teacher of Sahih Muslim and Mishkat Shareef, I found time to be a major restraint during the weekdays. So I settled into a habit of writing the Tafseer on Sundays, after Fajr Salâh.

By the Grace of Allâh and with the duâs of my Sheikh, Allâh ﷻ began to lighten the task, and gradually the 'burden' of the responsibility gave way to the sweetness of research and writing. That is why one may notice that I was unable to write much commentary in the beginning of the Sûrah, however, in the latter parts I have tried to cover as many topics as possible.

If I was asked as to the reason why my Hadhrat chose the Tafseer of Sûrah Yusuf in particular, I would not know the answer. However, I may venture to say that Sûrah Yusuf has many aspects, especially lessons regarding patience (Sabr), and those regarding dreams and their interpretations. Nowadays, people pay very little attention to dreams. When a person's life is engrossed in sin, he is more apt to see a nightmare than a sweet dream. If someone watches television till the late hours of the night, then falls asleep and neglects his Fajr Salâh, how can he expect to see a meaningful dream? This is why people have a deep neglect of this science. And if someone does relate a true dream and the interpretation turns out to be correct then many people refuse to accept this and simply make fun of such people. As the saying goes: الناس اعداء لما جهلوا 'People show hostility towards that which they do not know.'

My Hadhrat's name is Yusuf. Like the Prophet Yusuf ﷺ, Allâh ﷻ has blessed him with the wisdom of dreams and their interpretations. Hadhrat very often sees dreams, which turn out to be as clear as the stroke of dawn.

Recently, just before his departure for South Africa to visit his aged mother, his wife-whilst carrying their youngest son in her arms- slipped down a flight of stairs. Both were injured with the child having to be taken in emergency for treatment. When I heard of the incident, I approached Hadhrat to console him. He smiled and related a dream he saw the night before. He said, "The dunya of dreams is *Ajeeb* (Amazing). Sometimes the Angel of dreams comes and warns us of something which is going to happen." Thereafter, he said, "I saw that the majlis of Hadhrat Sheikh rahmatullahi alaihi was taking place. Hadhrat beckoned me and I was going towards him. Maulana Munawwar Hussain Sahib (a great Khalifah of Hadhrat) met me on the way and started talking to me. I listened to him then I mentioned that Hadhrat was calling me so I had to go. He obliged and we parted. I turned around to see that he started climbing some stairs, and I stood there motionless while he climbed, for he was elderly and I felt he might need some assistance. After climbing a few stairs, he tumbled and fell from step to step into a hawz (pond for wudhu) that was at the end. I rushed towards him and pulled him out. I thought that he might have been fatally injured. However, he opened his eyes and said, 'I am alright'."

Once he (Hadhrat) saw that the sun was rising in such a manner that a cross was embedded in it. He felt very grieved and related the dream in a very distressed manner saying, "We had hoped for the rising of Islam, and yet I see this?" Then a few days later he said, "The dream has been constantly on my mind and I am realizing that the cross was more like a plus sign in maths. I feel that the sun should not be interpreted according to its spelling but according to the pronunciation, which would be 'son'. I have a feeling that Allâh ﷻ is about to bless me with a son and perhaps not just one but more owing to the plus sign." The dream came true. First Allâh ﷻ gifted him with Muhammad and then Sulaiman.

Once he said, "I saw Maulana Ahmadullah Sahib rahmatullahi alaihi, the former Sheikhul Hadith of Jamiah Hussainiyah. He came to my house at the Darul-

Uloom and I was welcoming him." The next day Maulana's grandson, Hafiz Uwais, was brought to the Darul-Uloom for admission. Hadhrat said, "This is the interpretation. Maulana came to intercede for his grandson's admission."

Hadhrat is also gifted with the ability to interpret dreams in a wonderful manner. Maulana Yusuf Mamoon Sahib related that he saw Hadhrat Maulana Islamul-Haq Sahib rahmatullahi alaihi in a dream after his death. He saw him in Nebo Street in a very pleasant mood wearing bright white clothes. He had a tasbeeh in his hand. Maulana Mamoon asked him. "Hadhrat! Haven't you died?" He replied. "No I am alive."

Upon hearing the dream, Hadhrat replied, "When a person sees someone after his death as though he is still alive this means that Allâh ﷻ has given him the rank of a shaheed (a Martyr)." Allâh ﷻ says, "They are alive" and Allâh gives this rank to whoever he wills.

The Hadith says that the dream of a true believer is one part of the forty-six parts of Nubuwwah. In another hadith the Prophet ﷺ said, "Nothing from Nubuwwat is left except for Mubashshiraat." The companions asked, "What are Mubashshiraat O Rasoolullah?" He replied, "A good dream which a Muslim sees or which someone else sees for him."

Hadhrat Yusuf عليه السلام saw a dream, which turned out to be true. He interpreted the dream of the king as well as the dreams of the imprisoned ones. The Prophets used to have true dreams, so much so that Ibrahim عليه السلام prepared to sacrifice his beloved son, Ismail عليه السلام on seeing a dream for three consecutive nights. Our Prophet ﷺ used to relate his dreams and would interpret the dreams as seen by the Sahabah radhi Allahu anhum.

The Ulama of this Ummah have followed the Prophet ﷺ in every field and, consequently, they also see true dreams and give interpretations to them. Among the recent scholars are Hadhrat Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi rahmatullahi alaihi, Hadhrat Maulana Qasim Nanotwi rahmatullahi alaihi.

Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Maulana Muhammad Zakariyyah rahmatullahi alaihi

was also an expert in this field. He writes in one reply to a letter, "Your dream of killing snakes is a good dream, as it means 'killing' contemptible, vile habits. It would be a great gift of Allâh ﷻ if he killed-off my bad habits as well as those of yours and all my friends."

In another letter he writes: "Do not pay so much attention to dreams. If you see a pleasant dream thank Allâh. And if you see a disturbing dream then recite اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم then spit to your left. This is what we have been taught in Hadith. Dozens of people see dreams regarding the humble writer. However, I myself see very few dreams. I don't even mention to people that I saw this dream – your first dream that someone is preaching and the funeral of Rasulullah ﷺ is placed there; is quite clear. The Janazah of Rasulullah denotes the death of his Sunnahs. That Rasulullah is rubbing his hands over his face indicates his grief and distress over the situation of the Muslims. Your own grief in the dream shows your feelings over the state of Muslims, which you most often mention. May Allâh ﷻ revive our deen and may he give some sukoon (tranquility) to our Prophet ﷺ."

In another letter he writes: "To see oneself clean shaven in a dream depends upon the religious inclination of the person having the dream. If he is religious, then it is a glad tiding of forgiveness. 'The dwellers of Jannah will be hairless and beardless (Hadith).' However, if the person is irreligious then this is emulating the Kuffar. (i.e. the person may have a beard in reality but he might be copying the Kuffar in some other way). In your case the second interpretation cannot be taken into account, therefore, the first one is definite."

To summarise, dreams do have meanings. If a person sees a dream which he thinks could hold some meaning then he should enquire about its interpretation.

By the grace of Almighty Allâh, the Tafseer has been completed. I would categorically admit that this humble work does not do justice to what Allâh's words deserve. It would have been an impossibility for a sinful person like myself to write on the Paak and Pure words of The Almighty. If something good has been brought forth it is through the Grace of Allâh, and if mistakes have been made, then it is due to my inability – May Allâh forgive me.

But I am constantly reminded of my Hadhrat's urgings, for many a time the notion of not continuing had crossed my mind. But my Hadhrat's kind words of encouragement kept me going. May Allâh give him a long life, and may he keep his blessed shade over our heads for as long as we live. I remember reading the words of Mufti Mahmood Sahib in a letter to his Sheikh, Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith rahmatullahi alaihi He writes, "I wish I would die during the lifetime of my Hadhrat because then I could have some hope of dying with Imân, for the sanctity of my Imân is also due to your Duas and your blessed presence. I do not know whether I would be able to safeguard my Imân after Hadhrat, if Hadhrat were to die before me."

Furthermore, I would also like to thank the group of students who assisted me throughout the discourses with the typing and pagemaking. Most recently, Hafiz Irfan Sidyot, Hafiz Abid Ghulam Rasul, Molvi Saeed Mulla, Molvi Ishtiaq Vawda, Molvi Yunus Rawat and Molvi Asim Hafiz. Not to forget Molvi Ismail Gangat, Sister Aatika Bora and others who took the trouble of proof reading and correcting the early drafts.

May Allâh ﷻ accept our humble efforts and make them a source of forgiveness in the hereafter. Ameen!

Introduction

Tafseer of Sûrah Yusuf

Authors Note

I commence the Tafseer of Sûrah Yusuf in the name of Allâh ﷻ the Most Gracious the Most Merciful. I seek His refuge from all evils and I very humbly pray for His help in the hard task ahead of me.

As a beginner with no knowledge and no experience of writing in English I have nothing but high hopes for assistance from Allâh ﷻ. I have before me various translations of the Holy Qur'ân, from amongst which I give preference to the translation of Pickthall, thereafter Tafseer Majidi and then various others. I will try to make the commentary as short as possible, giving references for whatever I write.

A Brief Account of the Sûrah

Sûrah Yusuf is a Makkan Sûrah i.e. a Sûrah that was revealed in Makkah before Hijrah. It consists of 111 verses and 12 ruku's. It is named Sûrah Yusuf because the story of Yusuf ﷺ is mentioned therein. In the previous Sûrah (Sûrah Hood), the stories of a number of Prophets have been related, whereas in Sûrah Yusuf only one Prophet's story is mentioned. Stories of the Prophets are related in different chapters for different reasons, but mainly they serve to console the Holy Prophet ﷺ during the hardships he was enduring. The story of Yusuf ﷺ is mentioned in one chapter because it was revealed upon the request of people. Likewise the story of Ashaabe-Kahf and Zul-Qarnain is mentioned in only one chapter as it was revealed upon request.[1]

Cause Of Revelation

Many verses of the Holy Qur'ân are connected to certain incidents, which were the cause of their revelation. The Mufassireen rahimahumullah have written separate books regarding these causes, e.g. Allama Suyuti rahmatullahi alaihi's

[1] Mâriful Qur'ân of Maulana Idrees Khandhalwi

'Lubabunnuqul Fi Asbabin Nuzool' These incidents are quite important because quite often the meaning of a verse cannot be understood without knowing the reason for it's revelation.

In the case of Sûrah Yusuf, two reasons are mentioned:

1. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas said, "When Allâh revealed the Holy Qur'ân and the Holy Prophet had recited it to the Sahabah for a period of time, they once requested, "How wonderful it would be if you also conversed with us" thus Allâh revealed the verse "Allâh has sent down the best speech." Then they said, "O Prophet of Allâh tell us a story!" and Allâh revealed Sûrah Yusuf and the verse, "We are relating to you a very good narration."[2]
2. Dhahaak narrates from Ibn Abbas, "The Jews questioned the Prophet regarding the situation of the Prophet Yaqub and his sons, especially Yusuf. They enquired as to why and how they came to Egypt whilst they were originally from Can'aan, Syria." Thereupon Allâh revealed Sûrah Yusuf.[3]

Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi writes in 'Tafseer Majidi', "The story of Joseph as given in the Holy Qur'ân is similar but not identical to the Biblical story; the atmosphere is wholly different. The Biblical story is like a folk tale in which morality has no place. Its tendency is to exalt the clever, financially minded Jew against the Egyptian, and to explain certain ethnic and tribal peculiarities in late Jewish history. Joseph is shown as buying up all the cattle and the land of the poor Egyptians for the State under the stress of famine conditions, and making the Israelites rulers over Pharaoh's cattle. The Qur'ânic story, on the other hand, is more than a mere narrative than a highly spiritual sermon, explaining the seeming contradictions of life, the enduring nature of virtue in a world full of flux and change and the marvellous working of Allâh's eternal purpose in His plan as unfolded to us on the wide canvas of history."[4]

Introduction

I now briefly mention Yusuf's story on the authority of Allama Suyuti's

[2] Sûrah Yusuf 3 - Khâzin

[3] Khâzin

[4] Tafseer Majidi 356:2

'Durre Manthur'. Please note that some of the contents are debatable and shall be explained during the detailed commentary.

Ibn Jareer and Ibn Abi Hatim have related from Suddi, that Suddi has said, "Prophet Yaqub ﷺ was in Syria and his concern was only for his two sons, Yusuf and his brother Binyamin ﷺ. Their fathers extreme love for Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ caused the other brothers to become jealous of him. Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ once saw in his dream that eleven stars, the moon and the sun were in prostration before him. He informed his father of the dream and his father advised him, "O my son, do not recount thy vision to thy brethren, lest they may scheme a plot against thee." When the news of the dream reached his brothers it inflamed their jealousy and they exclaimed, "Surely Yusuf and his brother are more dearer to our father than we, whereas we are a band" (they were ten in number) "Our father is in a manifest error indeed." They meant that he is surely wrong in his judgment of us. "Slay Yusuf or cast him away to some land, your father's solitude will be free for you and you will be thereafter a people favoured" he means, seek repentance for what you did with him. Then a speaker from amongst them said (the speaker was Yahuza) "Do not slay Yusuf but cast him into the bottom of the well, some caravan will take him up if you must be doing." When they had decided over it, they approached their father and said to him "O our father! Why is it that thou does not trust us with Yusuf?" He replied, "I will never send him in your company for I fear lest a wolf may devour him, while you are in neglect of him. They said, 'If the wolf devoured him despite of our numbers, we shall surely be lost." Thus he sent Yusuf ﷺ with them.

It was only when they had reached the open country that they brought to light their enmity. One of them began to beat Yusuf ﷺ, so Yusuf ﷺ tried to seek help from another who in turn took over and also hit him. He found that none were merciful and they beat him till he was close to death. Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ began screaming and saying, "O father, O Yaqub, if only you were to know what is being done to your son by his half brothers." When the brothers had nearly killed him Yahuza cried (to his brothers), "Didn't you give me an oath that you would not kill Yusuf." They then took him to a well and began to lower him in, but the sides obstructed his descent. They tied his hands and pulled off his shirt as he pleaded, "O brothers! Give back my shirt so I may cover myself with

it in the well." Instead they taunted, "Call on the eleven stars, the moon and the sun to entertain you." He cried, "I did not see anything." They lowered him half way down the well then let him go, thinking that he would be killed, but there was water in the well and he landed inside it without any harm. He got on to a large stone and began to cry when his brothers began to call him.

They thought they should crush him with a boulder, but Yahuza got up and stopped them, he reminded them, "You have surely given me an oath that you would not kill him." Thereafter, Yahuza would bring food to him.

Before returning to their father they caught a small goat, slaughtered it and after spreading its blood on Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ's shirt they approached their father crying. Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ heard their voices, becoming frightened he asked, "O my sons, what has happened to you? Has some problem occurred with your goats?" They replied, "No." So he asked, "What has happened to Yusuf?" They said: "Father! We went off racing and left Yusuf by our things, so a wolf devoured him and though wilt not put credence in us." Meaning, will not believe us (Though we are the truthful). Thus, Yaqub ﷺ wept and screamed at the top of his voice then asked, "Where is his shirt." They brought him the shirt covered with false blood. He grabbed the shirt and threw it on his face and began to weep until his whole face was smeared with the blood from the shirt. He cried, "This wolf, O my children is merciless, so how did he eat Yusuf, and did not tear the shirt?"

There came a caravan and they sent their water drawer who let down his bucket. Yusuf ﷺ took hold of the rope at the bottom and appeared over the side. As soon as the person who had thrown in the bucket saw him, he called to one of his companions who was known as Bushra. He said, "O Bushra, this is a child." The brothers of Yusuf ﷺ upon hearing this came and informed them that this was a slave of theirs who had run away. They warned Yusuf ﷺ in their own language that if he refuted being their slave, they would surely kill him. "Do you think we can return with you to Yaqub ﷺ whereas we have informed him that a wolf has eaten you" they cried. Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ replied, "O my brothers! Return with me to my father Yaqub and I will bear the responsibility of his happiness with you and I will never mention this (incident) to you ever." But

they refused, so Yusuf ﷺ said, "I am their slave."

Thus, the two men purchased him. They then feared what to say to their caravan members if they asked where they had got him. So, They said, "We will tell them that these are some goods we purchased at the well", the Qur'ân says, 'they hid him as merchandise. And they sold him for a mean price! A few counted dirhams' (The sum was of twenty dirhams).

They took Yusuf ﷺ to Egypt where the King of Egypt bought him, and took him to his house. He said to his wife "Make his lodging goodly. Perhaps he may profit us or we may take him as a son." His wife fell in love with Yusuf ﷺ and said to him, "O Yusuf, how beautiful hair you have!" Yusuf ﷺ replied, "It will be the first part of my body to fall out and be scattered around." She said, "What beautiful eyes you have!" He replied, "They will be the first part of the body to flow to the ground." She then said, "O Yusuf, What beautiful face is yours!" He said, "It is for the soil to eat." Come on, O thou! This is in the Coptic language, he said, "Allâh ﷻ's refuge (I seek), he (the King) is my lord and he has made me a goodly dwelling, so I won't betray his trust with his wife." But she stayed on him until he began to desire her. She besought him and he besought her so they entered the house (and she closed the doors), he was about to open himself up when suddenly there was before him a vision of his father Yaqub ﷺ standing in the house biting on his finger. He was saying, "O Yusuf, do not have intercourse with her because you are like a bird in the sky that cannot be caught. When you fall on her you will be like the same bird when it dies, it falls on the earth and cannot protect itself. You are like an ox which has never been used (in the fields) and if you fall on her you will be like the same ox when it dies, water enters the roots of its horns but it cannot keep it away."

Thus, he pulled himself together and proceeded to the exit. She caught up with him and grabbed a handful of his shirt from behind and tore it. Yusuf ﷺ threw it down and hastened towards the door. They both found her master (her cousin brother) sitting by the door. Upon seeing him the woman exclaimed, "What is the need of him who intended evil towards thy household except that he be imprisoned or an afflictive chastisement?" "He tried to seduce me, so I pushed him away from myself and I tore his shirt." Yusuf ﷺ said, "No, she seduced

me, and upon refusing, she took hold of my shirt and tore it off me." Her cousin concluded that the reality could only be found from the shirt. He said, "Check and see if the shirt is torn from the front, only then she is true and he is from the liars. And if it is torn from the back, then she has lied and he is from the truthful." Hence when the shirt was brought, he found that it was torn from behind, so he said, "Verily it is the guile of you women, the guile of you women is mighty. Yusuf! Turn away from this, and thou O woman ask forgiveness for thy sin." He said, "Do not do this again." And the women in the town said, "The wife of the King has solicited her page. He has inflamed her with love."

'Shagaf' (the root of the word) mentioned in the Holy Qur'ân means a strike to the heart, which is known as the mouth of the heart. The statement means that the love entered the skin and reached the heart. Then she heard of their cunning talk. "She sent to them a messenger and prepared for them a banquet and provided each with a knife." and a citron to eat. Then she ordered Yusuf ﷺ to enter unto them. When he made his entry and the women saw him, they were completely taken aback. They began to cut their hands thinking that they were cutting the fruit. They were saying, "How perfect is Allâh ﷻ! No man is he (Yusuf); he is a noble angel."

She said, "This is whom you reproached me for. Assuredly I solicited him but he abstained." After he had opened his clothing, I don't know what made him change his mind. Yusuf said, "O my Lord! Prison is dearer to me than what these women call me to." Meaning unlawful intercourse. Then the woman said to her husband, "This Hebrew slave has degraded me amidst the people. He has excused himself by telling them that I tried to seduce him, and I can't go and tell them stories as well (make excuses), so either you grant me permission to go out and make excuses like he is doing, or put him into prison just as you have imprisoned me." This is where Allâh ﷻ says, 'Thereafter it occurred to them even after they had seen the signs'. Meaning the tear in the shirt, the cutting of the hands etc, to imprison him for a season. "There entered with him two youths in the prison" The king became angry with his baker who was plotting to poison him so he imprisoned him along with his butler (wine bearer).

When Yusuf ﷺ entered the prison he said, "I interpret dreams." One of the

youths said to his partner, "Come on we will test this Hebrew slave." They told of dreaming something, which they in reality had not dreamt about. They fabricated a story and Yusuf ﷺ interpreted their fabricated dream. The wine bearer said, "Verily I saw myself pressing wine" and the baker said, "Verily I saw myself carrying upon my head bread whereof the birds were eating." Yusuf ﷺ told them, "No food will not come to you for your sustenance, but that before it comes to you, I shall have declared to you the interpretation thereof."

Yusuf ﷺ gave the interpretation of the dreams saying, "One of you will pour out wine for his master." Meaning he will be returned to his original state. "As for the other he will be executed and birds will eat off his head."

We break the lengthy story here and commence with a detailed commentary of the Sûrah.

Tafseer Of Sûrah Yusuf

Tafseer Of Sûrah Yusuf

From the brief account of Yusuf ﷺ's story we may deduce some similarities between Yusuf ﷺ and our Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The beginning of Yusuf ﷺ's prophethood was marked by a true dream. Similarly Ummul Mu'mineen Aishah *radiyallhu anha* narrates, *"The first signs of revelation to the Holy Prophet ﷺ were through true dreams, whatever he dreamt would occur like the light of dawn"*[5]

Yusuf ﷺ had dreamt that eleven stars and the sun and moon were prostrating before him, which meant his parents and his eleven brothers will prostrate before him. The interpretation became reality though after a lengthy period of time.

The brothers of Yusuf ﷺ were jealous of him, they beat him and tortured him in many ways, and finally did their utmost to slay him. Nevertheless, Yusuf ﷺ kept patient and steadfast, seeking Allâh ﷻ's help, and Allâh ﷻ granted him dignity and victory, however when the brothers came before him he said to them, *"Let no reproach be on you today, May Allâh forgive you, and He is the kindest of the kind."* Yusuf ﷺ never complained nor did he mention their evils, rather he forgave them and bestowed upon them many favours and gifts.

Similarly, the Prophet of Allâh ﷺ was taunted and oppressed in many ways. The Quraish tried to kill him, but he stayed steadfast upon Allâh ﷻ's orders. When they came under his command after the conquest of Makkah he recited the same verse, *"Let no reproach befall you today, may Allâh forgive you for he is the kindest of the kind." "Go! You are the freed ones."* He also gave the many converts a great portion of the war booty gained in the Battle of Hunain, which took place straight after the conquest of Makkah. He gave them up to a hundred camels each.

Yusuf ﷺ's story showed his abstinence and piety. Even though he was in his prime youth and the desire for women and the temptation to commit sins was at its peak, he still safeguarded himself, with Allâh ﷻ's help of course. This shows

[5] Bukhari 3, Muslim 231, Tirmizi 3565

that Prophets are sinless. They cannot commit a sin because they have gained the special attention of Allâh ﷻ through their good deeds and through constant remembrance of Allâh ﷻ.

I recall here a story of Loot ﷺ in the bible, which says that when Allah's wrath descended upon the whole town and as a result all its inhabitants were killed, only Loot ﷺ and his two daughters were left behind. The daughters thought to themselves that now that the whole town has perished, we would not exist any longer unless we think of a way of becoming pregnant. They knew that their father would not commit adultery with his own daughters, so they plotted to give him some wine and make him drunk. Accordingly, they made him drunk on the first night and the elder sister slept with him, then on the second night the younger one did the same. They both got pregnant and the generation which now exists are the offspring of these two girls and their father.

How false is this story! Indeed it must stem from the additions made in the bible by some insane people. Who would want to accept that he is an illegitimate child? How can a Prophet of Allâh ﷻ commit such a grave sin? The baselessness of the story is self-evident.

Moreover, I was mentioning that Yusuf ﷺ safeguarded himself against the offer of a beautiful, young virgin. Similarly, such offers were made to our Noble Prophet ﷺ in his early prophethood, when the people of Makkah offered to marry him to their prettiest daughters in return for him forsaking his mission. The Holy Prophet ﷺ however remained steadfast.[6]

[6] Mâriful Qur'ân Khandhalwi

Verse 1

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الٓـرٰ تِلْكَ ايٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿١﴾

"Alif Laam Raa, These are the verses of the Manifest Book."

"Alif Laam Raa.."
These are abbreviated letters, *Al-Hurooful Muqatta'ât*. Much has been written about it's meanings. Some commentators say that they are names of Allâh ﷻ, some say that they are the names of the Sûrah's in which they are mentioned. This can be understood in Sûrah Yâseen, Tâ Hâ, Sâd, Qâf and Noon etc. The majority of *Mufassireen* say that they are a secret code between their Revealer and to whom they were revealed (i.e. Allah and his Prophet ﷺ).

Abu Bakr Siddique ؓ used to say, *"In every book there are some secrets and Allâh ﷻ's secrets in the Qur'ân are the letters in the beginning of the Sûrah's."*

Ali ؓ used to say, *"In every book there are some special words, the special words of this book are the Hurooful Hija."*

Umar Ibn Khattab, Uthman Ghani and Ibn Mas'ood ؓ have said, *"The Muqatta'ât are from those mysteries which cannot be explained."*

In other words, between each writer and to whom a letter is written, there are some signs which can only be understood by the two. Similarly there are some indications in these letters, which only Allâh ﷻ and his Holy Prophet ﷺ understand. We have been ordered to believe them, and for each letter we recite we shall receive ten *Hasanah* so for *Alif Laam Raa* we gain 30 *Hasanah*.

Qadhi Baidhawi *rahmatullahi alaihi* has given here a remarkable verdict regarding the *Muqatta'ât*, he says, *"What has been narrated from the Khulafa-e-Rashideen and other Sahabah ؓ could mean that their*

explanation is not intended. But at the same time they could be indicating towards the miraculous nature of the Qur'ân."

This could be explained in two ways:

1. The Arabic algebra from '*Alif*' up to '*Yaa*' consists of 29 letters. The *Muqatta'ât* are also from the same 29. The Holy Qur'ân is also compiled from the same 29 letters. The *kuffar* who are challenged with the Holy Qur'ân also converse through the same letters. The Qur'ân challenged the disbelievers in numerous verses to bring forward a work like the Qur'ân. None was able to do so and they admitted their failure. So with these letters Allâh reminds them that this book is not prepared with Chinese Alphabet, rather it is with the same alphabet, which you use and you should be able to tackle it. If you cannot do so then this means that this book is not Muhammads book - It is from a very high source i.e. the Lord of Muhammad ﷺ and the Lord of the Universe. Thus, the miraculous nature of the Holy Qur'ân becomes manifest.

2. To read the alphabetical letters correctly with their original pronunciation is the work of a person who has been to the Madrasah and learned under the guidance of an *Ustadh* (teacher). My daughter Aishah can fluently talk in her mother tongue; Gujrati. However, if she was asked to read the Gujrati alphabet she would never be able to do so, because she has not learned them.

There were only three learned persons in the whole of Makkah, who would read out letters and write their reply for the Makkans.

A person who has never visited a Madrasah in his whole life cannot read or pronounce the alphabet. For such a person (i.e. Muhammad ﷺ) to pronounce these letters correctly is quite impossible, especially when he mentions them in a remarkable manner which cannot be done by anyone, except a highly educated person e.g. the letters used in *Muqatta'ât* are 14, in 29 Sûrah's they are mentioned in halves according to the rules of *Tajweed* and those mentioned are ones mostly used in the Arabic language etc.

So the *Muqatta'ât* shed some light on the miracle of the Qur'ân through the

Sahib-e-Qur'ân (the one who brought it to us).

"These verses are of a manifest book...."
A manifest book means, one whose divine character is explicit and the commands, constitutions, sermons and instructions, are bright and clear.[7]

The Arabic language is described by the words 'manifest' and 'clear' in many other verses of the Qur'ân: *"And indeed this Qur'ân is a revelation of the Lord of the Worlds. The faithful spirit (Angel Jibraeel) came down with it. Upon thy heart that thou shouldst be one of the warners. In plain Arabic language." (I.e. the revelation is in plain Arabic language.)*[8]

"Language of that one to whom they refer is non-Arabic, whereas this (the Qur'ân's language) is very clear Arabic."[9]

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has urged his followers to speak Arabic. He once said to the Sahabah, *"Whosoever has a capability of conversing in Arabic must not speak a non-Arabic language, because the non-Arabic languages create hypocrisy."* (Ibn Taymiya on the authority of Al-Silafi from Ibn Umar)

He ﷺ also said, *"There are three reasons for being attached to Arabic; 1. I am an Arab, 2. The words of the Qur'ân are Arabic and 3. The conversation of Jannaties shall be in Arabic."* (Ibn Asaakir from Ibn Abbas)

Umar Ibn Khattab says, "Learn Arabic, because it is part of your deen." (Introduction to Maqamat by Maulana Idrees kandhalwi)

Arabic is the oldest language on Earth. In *'Roohul Ma'ani'* it is stated that when Adam was created he was taught Arabic and he used to converse in Arabic. When he made the mistake of eating from the prohibited tree, he was sent to Earth and Arabic was taken away from him, he was then taught another language called Suryani. After accepting his repentance, Allâh returned Arabic

[7]Uthmani 1040:2

[8]Sûrah Shu'râ 92-195

[9]Sûrah Hâ Meem Sajdah 40

to him. Then as time went on and his children spread, they invented other languages.

Arabic has many qualities. It is so vast that for expressing one meaning you can find plenty of words and for one word there are several meanings e.g. 'Lion' has five hundred words, for 'sword' there are one thousand words, for 'calamity' there are four thousand words, and for 'snake', two hundred words.

Verse 2

إِنَّآ أَنْزَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾

"We have revealed it, a Qur'ân in Arabic so that You may understand it."

Arabic is *the* most versatile, and well ordered, wise and grand language. It has been chosen for the revelation of the Qur'ân. As the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself is an Arab, the first audience of the Qur'ân are also Arabs. So through the Arabs this light should be spread to all four corners of the Earth. The words 'You may understand' indicate this fact, i.e. one of the reasons for revealing in your language is that you are the nation of the Prophet ﷺ, so first you should taste its knowledge and secrets then make others taste them - And so it happened.

Ibn Kathir writes: *"The most honourable book, was revealed in the most honourable words, upon the most honourable Prophet, through the most honourable angel, and this took place in the most honourable part of the earth (Makkah), the beginning of the revelation was in the most honourable month of the year which is Ramadhân, so it is perfected from all channels."*[10]

Some scholars say that the Jews taught the polytheists of Makkah how to test the Holy Prophet ﷺ by questioning him about the story of Jacob and Joseph. This story existed in the Hebrew language (which the Arabs do not understand)

[10] Uthmani 1040:2

so Allâh ﷻ revealed this Sûrah and narrated the story in Arabic so that the Arabs could understand it.[11]

With regards to there being Non-Arabic words in the Qur'ân there is a difference of opinion:

1) Abu Ubaydah رضي الله عنه is of the opinion that there is not a single non-Arabic word in the Holy Qur'ân. He supports his view through the verse before us, i.e. *"A Qur'ân in Arabic."*

2) Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه, Mujahid and Ikrimah are of the opinion that there are some non-Arabic words in the Qur'ân e.g. *'Qistaas'*, *'Sijjeel'*. *'Qistaas'* is a Roman word meaning 'Justice', and *'Sijjeel'* is a Persian word meaning 'Stones of Gravel'.

Khâzin says, *"Both opinions are correct; in the sense that the words mentioned are originally non-Arabic, but when the Arabs used them in their conversation, they became Arabic and are now regarded as Arabic words, though originally derived from another language."*[12]

Verse 3

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا

الْقُرْاٰنَ وَ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَمِنَ الْغٰفِلِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾

"We narrate unto you the most beautiful of stories, in that we have inspired in you this Qur'ân, though before (its narration) you were of the unaware."

"We narrate..."
It is customary of the Almighty Lord that He uses the pronoun of plural in many

[11] Khâzin
[12] Khâzin

verses of the Holy Qur'ân. Even though He is the One and only God, He has no partners nor any children; He uses it to show His Pride and Dignity. Indeed He alone is worthy of all pride and dignity that prevails within the universe. The Holy Prophet ﷺ narrates a saying of Allâh ﷻ, *"Pride is my upper sheet and Dignity is my Lower sheet, whosoever attempts to separate them from me, I shall throw him in the fire."*
He also said, *"In comparison to Allâh ﷻ there is none who loves being praised so much."*

So it is only He who is worthy of all lofty ranks, He is the Lord, the Majestic, the Creator, and the Sustainer and only He is worthy of All Praises. This is why He uses the word 'We'.

I clarified this matter because it so happened that once a group of Christian missionaries pretending to be attracted to Islam entered the Jami Masjid in Preston and started showering questions on the Imam. Their main question was what I have indicated above, i.e. 'If Allâh ﷻ is one then why does he say, We have done this, We have created this etc.?' The word 'We' points towards the Christian belief of trinity.

The answer is very clear from what I have said above that the use of 'We' is solely to show His Pride and Dignity. Do they not see that the Queen uses the pronoun We in her address to the nation on Christmas Day!

The same Qur'ân which uses 'We' has rejected any partnership to Allâh ﷻ by saying, *"Surely those disbelieve who say Allâh ﷻ is the third of three."* The Qur'ân declares the unity of God by saying, *"Say: He is Allâh , the one! Allâh the eternal besought of all, He begotteth not nor was He begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him."*[13]

The answer is very clear. May the Almighty Allâh ﷻ safeguard our Imân and keep us steadfast upon the straight path. *Ameen.*

"The most beautiful of stories..."
The indication is either towards the whole Qur'ân, as the Qur'ân consists of

[13] Sûrah Ikhlaas

stories of the previous nations to take heed from, or towards the story of Yusuf ﷺ, because it is full of wisdom and knowledge. It consists of tales of kings, slaves and scholars of the time, the evil plots of women, being patient in the face of hardships put up by enemies, forgiving them when they come under ones command, and other benefiting factors of the Sûrah.
Ataa *rahmatullahi alaihi* says, *"Whichever grieved person recites Sûrah Yusuf, he will get comfort through it."*[14]

Some Ulama say that this Sûrah is named the best of narrations because there is no other Sûrah in the Holy Qur'ân, which consists of so much wisdom and so many lessons as this Sûrah. The final verse of this Sûrah verifies this, *"Indeed there is in their stories institution for men endured with understanding."*[15]

"You were of the unaware...."
Hadhrat Maulana Idrees Khandhalwi *rahmatullahi alaihi* writes, *"There are three sources of knowing something: common sense; by listening to someone or reading a book; by seeing it with one's own eyes."*

The previous stories have no connection with common sense, as the events of the past cannot be known through common sense. The Noble Prophet ﷺ did not hear these stories from any historian. If someone says he heard the stories from a particular Jew or Christian then he should make the identity of that person known. The Noble Prophet ﷺ was unlettered so it is impossible to say that he may have read those events in a book. Furthermore, which books were available to look through them and in which library were they to be found? Those who object should bring forth names of such libraries. With regards to the third point, it is apparent that these events occurred long before the era of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, so he was not there to observe them. Now there is only one possibility, and that is to know these events through an external source, which is known in the *Shari'âh* as *Wahi*. Allâh ﷻ through the angel Jibraeel ﷺ revealed the stories to him. Thus, his prophethood becomes evident and the Miracle of the Holy Qur'ân comes to light.

[14] Khâzin

[15] Qurtubi 120:9

Allama Uthmani *rahmatullahi alaihi* says in his commentary, *"Through the revelation sent down upon you in the form of the Qur'ân we relate to you a very fine story in a very beautiful style. You were not aware of this story as your people were quite ignorant of it up to this time."*

This story was found in the books of history and the Bible but in the form of fiction. The Holy Qur'ân has described the story in its true form, and its relevant and useful portions are so impressively narrated that it not only pointed out the mistakes of the People of the Book and the storywriters but also led towards more significant and glorious conclusions and principles. Rightly speaking, it opened a new chapter of knowledge and research and supplied deep directions under its reflective description. Some of the most important facts and lessons are summarised below:

1. The determination of Allâh ﷻ cannot be checked, nor delayed, nor put off by any power, and when Allâh ﷻ wills to bestow His grace upon any individual no one can deprive him of that blessing. Even the whole world cannot change the will of Allâh ﷻ by its collected efforts.

2. Patience and perseverance is the key to the success of this world and the prosperity of the other world.

3. The result of malice and envy is but loss and degradation.

4. Human wisdom is a very noble element. By wisdom, man overcomes many difficulties and makes his life successful in both worlds.

5. Moral virtue and piety makes a man honourable in the eyes of the enemies and malevolent people, though it may be after a long run. These and other innumerable secrets and facts are described in this, the most beautiful of stories.

Commentators have described several traditions about the origin of its revelation. The substance of all these traditions is that once the Jews questioned the Holy Prophet ﷺ, through the Meccan Idolaters, about the settlement of the Bani Israeel in Egypt. They asked how they settled in Egypt (that they had to face

Pharaoh) when Hadhrat Ibrahim ﷺ and Hadhrat Ishaq ﷺ and their children originally belonged to the country of Shaam. The Muslims have also probably been curious to know the real story full of facts and insights. Moreover, the events and incidents, which were elaborated in the Sûrah, had a parallel with those occurring in the times of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The revelation was as such, a great source of peace and consolation to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the other side it was a great lesson to open the eyes of the Meccan people, who had at last compelled the Holy Prophet ﷺ to vacate his native land, but failed in their plans to bring about the downfall of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Jews, whose questions were characterised by a malicious test to disprove his Prophethood, got a satisfactory answer to their query but still resisted from believing in his Prophethood. However, the main cause of the settlement of Bani Israeel in Egypt is the story of Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ. Generations of Bani Israeel spread there till Hadhrat Musa ﷺ rose and emancipated them from the slavery of Pharaoh and the Qibtees."

Verse 4

اِذْ قَالَ يُوْسُفُ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ رَاَيْتُ اَحَدَعَشَرَ كَوْكَبًا وَّ الشَّمْسَ
وَ الْقَمَرَ رَاَيْتُهُمْ لِيْ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾

When Yusuf said to his father, "O Father! I saw in a dream eleven stars and the sun and the moon, I saw them prostrating before me."

Yusuf ﷺ was the son of Yaqub ﷺ as is stated in a *Hâdith* in Bukhari: *"The noble personality; son of a noble one son of a noble person son of a noble one is, Yusuf son of Yaqub son of Ishaq son of Ibrahim."*

Another *Hâdith* in the *Sahih* says: 'The Prophet ﷺ was questioned, *"Who is the most noble of all?"* He replied, *"The noblest of people is he who is best in conduct."* They said, *"We do not ask about this."* He exclaimed, *"Then the noblest of people is Yusuf, Prophet of Allâh ﷺ, son of a Prophet of Allâh ﷺ, son of a Prophet of Allâh ﷺ, son of Khalilullah."* They said, *"We*

do not ask about this." He questioned, *"Then you ask me about the mines of Arabs."* (I.e. just as the mines throw out gold, silver, copper steel, coal etc. the Arabs are of different types.) They replied in the affirmative. He said, *"Then he who was the best of people during Jahiliyyah is the best in Islam, if he attains the understanding of religion."'*[16]

There are two opinions with regards to the name Yusuf:
1. It is a Hebrew name, i.e. non Arabic
2. It is an Arabic name

Khâzin has narrated from Abul Hasan Al-Aqta', *"Asaf literally means grief at its highest level, whereas Aseef means slave. Both meanings prevailed in Yusuf thus he was named Yusuf."*[17]

Yusuf ﷺ was the most handsome child of Yaqub ﷺ. Although his eleven brothers were also very handsome, Yusuf ﷺ's beauty was outstanding. In Sahih Bukhari we read, *"In the night of Me'raj I passed by Yusuf, I realised that he was given half a portion of the beauty of mankind."*[18]

When he saw the dream he was seventeen years old. His father loved him so much that he couldn't bear his separation and for this reason when he was separated he cried so much that he became blind.

Qadhi Sayyid Sulaiman Mansoorpuri writes, He stayed in the well for three days, then he served the ruler of Egypt for six years, and then spent seven years in jail. At the age of thirty he became the governor of Egypt. He was reunited with his parents at forty and departed from this world at 110. His coffin was buried in Egypt. He made a will that when Bani Israeel leave Egypt they should take his coffin with them and bury him near Baitul Maqdis. When Musa ﷺ left Egypt with Bani Israeel, it became impossible for the caravan to proceed. Musa ﷺ remembered the will of Yusuf ﷺ, so he dug the coffin out and took it with

[16]Bukhari 3104, Muslim 4383, Abu Dawud 4229, Musnad Ahmad 7183, Muwatta Malik 1573 - Ibn Kathir

[17]Khâzin

[18]Muslim 234, Musnad Ahmad 12047

him to Baitul Maqdis where it was buried in the graveyard of Ibrahim *Khalilullah*, along with his ancestors.

"I saw eleven stars, the sun and the moon..."
Khâzin says, "Yusuf ﷺ saw that the stars descended from the sky along with the sun and the moon and prostrated before him. He saw this dream on a Friday night (the night preceding Friday), which was also *Lailatul Qadr*. The interpretation was that the eleven stars were his eleven brothers who were to be a source of guidance like the stars, the sun his father and the moon his mother according to the opinion of Qatada."

Suddi says that the moon is his aunt because his real mother Raheel (Rachel) had died. (It is the custom to call fathers second wife as mother especially when she is the mother's sister.)

"I saw them prostrating before me..."
Khâzin says this could have two meanings:
1) By prostrating, it is meant that they would come under his rule. (This happened when they settled down in Egypt and Yusuf ﷺ was its ruler.)
2) The literal meaning i.e. putting the forehead on earth can also be taken into account, because in those times it was a form of greeting. Our *Shari'âh* has now forbidden this.

In Sunan Ibn Majah we read: 'When Muaz returned from Syria, he prostrated before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ exclaimed, *"O Muaz! What is this?"* He replied, *"When I went to Syria I saw the Christians prostrating before their religious leaders and their generals. So I thought to myself that we should do the same to you."* Prophet of Allâh ﷺ said, *"Do not do this! If I were to order someone to prostrate in front of anyone other than Allâh, I would order the wife to prostrate before her husband (due to the rights he has over her). By He who holds my soul! A woman cannot fulfill the rights of her Lord (Allâh) until she has fulfilled the rights of her husband."*'[19]

In Mishkât we read on the authority of Imam Ahmad *rahmatullahi alaihi*,

Aishah *radiyallahu anha* says, "The Prophet ﷺ was seated between the Muhajireen and Ansaar, when a camel came forward and prostrated before the Prophet ﷺ. The Sahabah ؓ said, *"O Prophet of Allâh! Even the animals and the trees prostrate before you, you have more rights over us and therefore we should prostrate before you."* He replied, *"Worship your Lord and respect your brother"* (i.e. he called himself their brother due to humbleness and in order to draw their attention to the fact that he was a human being who was not worthy of worship). Then he used similar words to those mentioned in the above Hâdith.[20]

In Abu Dawud we find the same request from Qays Ibn Sa'ad ؓ to which the Prophet ﷺ said, *"If you were to pass by my grave, would you prostrate to it?"* He said, *"No."* The Prophet ﷺ replied, *"Then don't* (prostrate before me while I am alive and in front of you).*"*[21]

Teebi explains, *"Prostration is the right of only He who is eternal, who is alive and does not die, and to who's sovereignty there is no end."* In other words the Prophet ﷺ said, *"You might bow down before me due to respect while I'm in front of you, but when I go beneath the soil you would dislike doing the same to me."* It concludes that you would only prostrate before someone who is alive and that is only Allâh, so you should prostate before Him alone.[22]

Shah Abdul Ghani *rahmatullahi alaihi* writes in the commentary of Ibn Majah, *"Prostrating before someone or something for worship is Kufr and prostrating for greeting is although not regarded as Kufr, nevertheless it is Haram, because the Prophet ﷺ forbade the Sahabah ؓ from doing so."*

Qadhi Sulaiman *rahmatullahi alaihi* writes, "Yusuf ؑ's dream is amazing due to three reasons:

1) Seeing eleven stars with the existence of the Sun is amazing because the

[19] Ibn Majah 1843

[20] Musnad Ahmad 23331

[21] Abu Dawud 1828

[22] Mishkât 282

stars fade away at the light of dawn. It is impossible to see the Sun and the stars together.
2) What is the reason behind seeing just eleven among thousands?
3) He saw them prostrating which is also astonishing, as stars cannot prostate before anything.

These are the reasons why Yusuf ﷺ related the dream to his beloved father.

Verse 5

قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تَقْصُصْ رُءْيَاكَ عَلٰٓى اِخْوَتِكَ فَيَكِيْدُوْا لَكَ كَيْدًا ۭ
اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لِلْاِنْسَانِ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿۵﴾

He said, "O' my dear son! Do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise secretly a plot against you. Indeed Satan is to man an open foe."

Allama Uthmani writes, "Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ said to Yusuf ﷺ, *"Do not disclose this dream to your brothers. The Satan is always lying in ambush for man, he may instigate your brothers against you through insinuation, because the interpretation of the dream is too clear."*

It was not a difficult thing for the brothers of Yusuf ﷺ to understand the meaning of the dream. They were the sons of a great Prophet and therefore Yaqub ﷺ's apprehension was not wrong. Perhaps he might have also felt beforehand that the stepbrothers of Yusuf ﷺ were jealous of Yusuf because of the attention and love their father reserved for him. So Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ thought that if his brothers heard the dream, they would surely do something harmful to Yusuf ﷺ and thus degrade themselves and make their end disastrous. The Satan would play his most active role in this drama because the matter belonged to no less than a Prophet and his family. This was the reason why Yaqub ﷺ forbade Yusuf ﷺ to disclose his vision before his stepbrothers. As for his real brother Binyamin, although there was no fear that he would harm

Yusuf, it was very likely that Binyamin might disclose it before other people, as he was a boy younger than Yusuf ﷺ, and thus the news might reach the ears of the stepbrothers.[23]

Ru'yaa literally means a dream. Dreams are of three types:
1) *Hadithun Nafs*: The conversation of the heart. When a person engages himself in a task throughout the day, he may see that in his dreams at night e.g. a person in love shall see his beloved one, one who is engrossed in the election sees the assembly halls, a students worried about exams sees exam related scenes, etc.
2) *Adhgaathu Ahlaam*: Disturbing dreams. Dreams seen through the instigation of Shaytaan. These are sometimes terrifying, sometimes worrying and sometimes pleasing; wet dreams also come under this category.

These two types do not hold any interpretation. A person affected by satanic attacks should recite *Aayatul Kursi* before retiring to bed. In a *Hâdith* in Sahih Bukhari the Prophet ﷺ has said that if you recite *Aayatul Kursi* before retiring to bed, Allah ﷻ will command an angel to stand by your bedside and no Satan will be able to come close to you. The angel stays there until you wake up.

3) *Ru'ya-e-Salih*: Just and pious dreams. Dreams that are free from self-indulgence and satanic attacks.

The Ulama say that this is a sort of spiritual sighting. When a person sleeps and his external senses are out of function, the spirit observes and listens to the matters of the unseen world. The spirit sometimes listens to the sayings of Allâh, His angels, sometimes it sees original forms of worldly things and sometimes their identical/similar appearances which indicate towards the future events e.g. Yusuf ﷺ's dream of eleven stars, the sun and the moon bowing before him which indicates future events. These are the true dreams and they require interpretations from an expert in this field. In the *Hâdith,* these dreams are said to be the forty-sixth part of Prophethood. Meaning that the Prophets were first bestowed with true dreams and then with Prophethood.

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[23] Uthmani 1043:2

Since the Prophets are free from self-deceit as well as from the instigations of Satan, their dreams are also *Wahi*. Satan can never overpower them; thus whatever they dream is a revelation from Allâh. Ibrahim ﷺ dreamt that he was slaughtering Ismail, his only son at the time, and he acted accordingly.

The *Awliya* are not *ma'soom* and thus their dreams cannot be regarded as *Wahi*. Their dreams are called *ilhaam*. The dreams of a saint will be according to his virtues and piety i.e. the more piety, the more truthful his dreams. The average Muslim's dreams are sometimes true and sometimes false.

Note. Sometimes a *fasiq* or even a *kafir* also sees true dreams. Like in our story, the ruler of Egypt, a *kafir*, saw seven cows and seven green ears of corn and it was interpreted by Yusuf ﷺ.

Note. Some philosophers deny the concept of dreams. Their main argument is that during the sleep or a state of unconsciousness the senses of a human being are out of function thus they cannot see nor hear nor feel anything.

One may ask, 'Did these philosophers never see a dream during their lifetime?' Certainly, they must have dreamt something at some stage. Our answer to their objection is that the senses are merely a creation of Allâh ﷻ. He is capable of showing us something without the aid of the senses.

The definition of dreams according to Imam Nawawi and Imam Mazri is, "Allâh ﷻ creates within the heart of a sleeper some observations in the same manner as He creates within the heart of the one awake. He can do whatever He wishes, sleep nor being awake can stop Him from fulfilling His desire."[24]

Ta'beer

Every layman cannot conduct an interpretation of dreams. It needs a detailed study of the rules of interpretation. One should know fully the language in which the dream was seen, he should know the Qur'ân and *Sunnah*, he should have in mind the interpretations given by the Prophet ﷺ and by the pious followers

[24] Mâriful Qur'ân Khandhalwi, Khâzin

among the Ummah. Otherwise, silly mistakes will take place and interpretations will be incorrect. Once a person narrated his dream to the Prophet ﷺ. Abu Bakr Siddique ؓ requested permission and gave the interpretation. The Prophet ﷺ said, *"You got some of it right, and you faltered in some."*

Muhammad Ibn Sireen, who is the Imam of interpretation, was confronted by a person who said, *"I dreamt myself giving Adhaan,"* He said, *"You shall be blessed with a journey for hajj."* Another person came and related the same dream. He said, *"I fear that you shall be engaged in a robbery."* His students were amazed at the different interpretations of one dream. He said, *"The first person looked religious, and I took interpretation from the verse, 'And call unto mankind for hajj.'*[25] *The other person was of a different state and I took the interpretation from the verse, 'Then a herald called out, "O' caravans, you are thieves."*[26] His interpretation proved to be true.

Abu Musa ؓ narrates, "The Prophet ﷺ once said, *"I saw in a dream that I am migrating from Makkah to a town of palm trees. My thought was drawn towards Yamamah or Hajar, then it turned out to be Yathrib (an earlier name of Madinah) and I once dreamt that I shook my sword and it broke from the centre, this was the tragedy that befell the Muslims in the battle of Uhud. Then I saw that I shook it once more and it returned to the best of forms, and this was the conquest of Makkah and the unity of Muslims which Allâh generated for us."*[27]

Abu Hurairah ؓ narrates that the Prophet ﷺ said, *"While I was sleeping, the treasures of the earth were brought before me, then two golden bangles were put on my fists. They became a burden for me. I was ordered to blow them, I blew and they disappeared. I took the interpretation that they are the two impostors surrounding me; Aswad Anasi of Sana and Musaylama of Yamamah."*[28]

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[25] Sûrah Hajj 27

[26] Sûrah Yusuf 70

[27] Bukhari 6514/6519, Muslim 4217, Ibn Majah 3911

[28] Bukhari 6513, Muslim 4218, Tirmizi 2216, Musnad Ahmad 7901

Note. Ibn Umar ﷺ narrates, *"It is from the greatest forgeries that a person shows his eyes what they have not seen."* (I.e. one says that I saw such and such a dream when he has not seen it in reality. It is regarded as the greatest lie, because it is lying on Allâh ﷻ, that Allâh ﷻ showed me such and such a dream whereas Allâh ﷻ never did.)[29]

Note. Abu Saeed narrates from the Prophet ﷺ, *"The most correct dreams are those seen in the early hours of the morning."* (Since the body has completed its rest, the stomach is empty and therefore there is less possibility of a dream caused by the filling up of the intestines. Also, this is the time of descent of the angels and the time of acceptance of duâs.)[30]

"Indeed Satan is to man an open foe."
Another verse in Sûrah Faatir says, *"Verily, Satan is an enemy to you so treat him as an enemy. He only invites his adherents that they might become the companions of the blazing fire."*[31]

His enmity with man started when he was ordered to prostrate before Adam عليه السلام and he rejected, objecting in a very jealous manner by saying, *"I have been created from fire and he from clay. And fire is superior to clay. So the superior must not prostrate before the inferior."* He was then expelled from Jannah (paradise) and he vowed, *"Then by thy power I shall lead them all astray."*[32]

He also said, *"Surely I shall take an appointed portion from thy bondsmen. And surely I will mislead them, and surely I will create false desires in them, and surely I will command them to slit the ears of the cattle, and surely I will command them and they will change Allâh's creation (deface the nature)."* (Allâh ﷻ says) *"And whosoever chooses Satan for a friend instead of Allâh has surely suffered a loss that is manifest. Satan promises them and creates in them false hopes, but Satan's promises are nothing*

[29] Bukhari

[30] Tirmizi 2200, Musnad Ahmad 10810, Darami 2053

[31] Sûrah Fath 6

[32] Sûrah Sâd 82

but deception."[33]

Verse 6

وَ كَذٰلِكَ يَجْتَبِيْكَ رَبُّكَ وَ يُعَلِّمُكَ مِنْ تَاْوِيْلِ الْاَحَادِيْثِ وَ يُتِمُّ
نِعْمَتَهٗ عَلَيْكَ وَ عَلٰٓى اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ كَمَآ اَتَمَّهَا عَلٰٓى اَبَوَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ
اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَ اِسْحٰقَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٦﴾

And thus does your Lord choose you and teach you the reality of events and complete His favours upon you and upon the family of Yaqub, just as He completed them upon your two fathers, Ibrahim and Ishaq formerly, verily your Lord is knowing, wise.

Tafseer Majidi comments, *"And as thou hast seen in thy dream, thy Lord will choose thee for His apostleship, and as a further gift He will teach thee the interpretation of discourses, and will fulfill His favours upon the house of Yaqub."*

"Choose you..."
The Sufees say that there are two types of people among those associated with Allâh. 1. Those who are chosen by Allâh. 2. Those who draw themselves closer to Allâh and attain His pleasure. Allâh says, *"Allâh chooses for Himself whom He wills, and guides unto Himself who turns (to Him)."*[34]

The Prophets are definitely from the first category, as prophethood cannot be achieved by abundance in worship or any other way. Nevertheless, among the Prophets of Allâh, there are some who seem to be distinguished in this respect, for example, our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is so beloved to Allâh, that Allâh has never addressed him by his name. We study the Qur'ân and realise that on

[33] Sûrah Nisâ 118-120

[34] Sûrah Shu'râ 13

some occasions Allâh addresses him with the words '*O Muzzammil*' on some occasions He says '*O Muddathir*' or '*Ya-ayyuhan-nabiye*' or '*Ya-ayyuhar-rasool*'.

In the same way Allâh has shown this special love to Musa ﷺ and Ibrahim ﷺ. When we read the above verse, we understand that Yusuf ﷺ is also among those who are specially chosen by Allâh and most beloved to Allâh.

"And teaches you the reality of events."

The words realities of events are very meaningful. They include the sharpness and alertness to solve the most complicated matters with ease. The ability to see events before their occurrence, and the interpretations of dreams. All of these qualities can be found in Yusuf ﷺ.

Yusuf ﷺ specialised in interpretations of dreams. Some scholars have said that he is the founder of this science. From the Muslim *Ummah* Imam Muhammad Ibn Sireen, the great scholar is said to be the Imam of this field.

"Complete his favours..."

The Arabic word '*Ni'mah*' is literally used for circumstances in which a person gains pleasure. In the Holy Qur'ân the word has been used for internal, external, religious and worldly pleasures alike:

"And hath loaded you with His favours both without and within."[35]

"And if you would count the bounty of Allâh ye cannot reckon it."[36]

"The path of those whom Thou hast favoured."[37]

"He (Jesus) is nothing but a servant (of Allâh) on whom we bestowed favour."[38]

Taking these verses into account we learn that the favours fulfilled on Yusuf ﷺ are of all kinds and the biggest favour amongst them is apostleship.

[35] Sûrah Luqmân 20

[36] Sûrah Ibrahim 34

[37] Sûrah Zukruf 59

[38] Sûrah Zukruf 59

"Thy lord is knowing wise."

By ending the verse with these words there is an indication towards the reason for the preference of Yusuf عليه السلام i.e. since Allâh knows everything and since He is the most wise, He has chosen you. Allâh says, in another verse: *"Allâh knows best with whom to place his message."* There is also an indication that the knowledge and wisdom which Yusuf عليه السلام is going to receive is from non but the All-Knowing and Wise Creator Himself.

Verse 7

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي يُوسُفَ وَإِخْوَتِهِ آيَاتٌ لِّلسَّائِلِينَ ﴿٧﴾

"Verily in Yusuf and his brethren there are signs (of Allâh's sovereignty) for the seekers (of truth)."

Tafseer Uthmani comments, "Those who want to learn a lesson (reach some result) by such stories, for them there are ample signs of guidance and lesson in the story of Yusuf عليه السلام and his brethren. Hearing this story, a mark of mighty power and Glory of Allâh ﷻ is inscribed in the hearts. The proof of the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is obtained in that he has divulged the historical facts so thoroughly and clearly, though he is *'Ummi'* and has not learnt from any mortal. No explanation to this fact can be given except that Divine Revelation had taught him and informed him about the historical details of the past. For the Quraish who had enquired about this story at the incitement of the Jews, there is a great lesson in that as the brothers of Yusuf عليه السلام drove him out of the house, plotted his murder and expulsion, and degraded him immensely. At last one day they came to him remorsefully and in utter destitution. Allâh ﷻ raised Yusuf عليه السلام to the high ranks of spiritual and material wealth and glory, and he in return turned a blind eye to the faults of his brothers and forgave them with an open heart. Similarly the brethren of the Holy Prophet ﷺ made unholy schemes against him, troubled him mercilessly, attacked his innocence and prestige and finally compelled him to leave his home. Soon the day came when the sun of his glory shone and after a few years the historical day of The Meccan Victory came when the Holy Prophet ﷺ forgave his country brothers their past faults saying

the same words which Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ said to his brethren.

"...and his brethren.."

Yusuf had one real brother, Binyamin, and ten half brothers. The names are as follows:

1. Reuben, 2. Shamoon, 3. Laawi, 4. Yahuda, 5. Ashkaar and 6. Zabhan, these six are from the wife 'Leah'. 7. Jadd and 8. Aaashar, from slave girl 'Zulfa'. 9. Naftali and 10. Dan, from slave girl 'Balha'.[39]

As mentioned before, it must be kept in mind that Yusuf ﷺ's brothers were not Prophets. There is neither any Islamic narration nor any Israeli story regarding their prophethood. This is the opinion of Ibn Hazm, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Taymiyah and Allama Uthmani rahmatullahi alaihim.

Some scholars held the opinion of their prophethood. Their main reasoning is through the verse, *"We revealed upon Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq and Yaqub and the tribes, etc."* The indication of tribes is thought to be towards the sons of Yaqub ﷺ.

However, Ibn Kathir says that the said meaning is merely one possible interpretation. The other meaning which is a much stronger is that since the Prophets of Bani Israel were from the progeny of Yaqub ﷺ, the indication is towards those Prophets and not towards the sons of Yaqub ﷺ. Allâh knows best.

Note: Yusuf ﷺ had ten brothers who plotted against him and in the end Yusuf ﷺ was victorious. Similarly there were ten tribes of Quraish who were the most active in hurting our beloved Prophet ﷺ. Namely, 1. Banu Makhzoom, 2. Banu Adyy, 3. Banu Tameem, 4. Banu Asad, 5. Banu Umayyah, 6. Banu Saheem, 7. Banu Hanifa, 8. Banu Abd-ddar, 9. Banu Ka'ab and 10. Banu Nawfal. They embraced Islam in the end.[40]

[39] Qazi

[40] Qazi p.45

Verse 8

اِذْ قَالُوْا لَيُوْسُفُ وَ اَخُوْهُ اَحَبُّ اِلٰٓى اَبِيْنَا مِنَّا وَ نَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ ط

اِنَّ اَبَانَا لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنِ ﴿٨﴾

Recall, when they said, "Surely Yusuf and his brother (Binyamin) are dearer to our father than we, whereas we are more powerful than they, and indeed our father is in a clear mistake.

Here Tafseer Majidi relates the verses of the Bible, which are quite similar to the Qur'ânic verses.

The Bible says, *"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age."* [41] *"His father loved him above the rest of his sons, both because of the beauty of his body and the virtues of his mind, for he excelled the rest in prudence."* [42] *"Upon Joseph centered the love of his father."* [43]

Allama Uthmani writes, "Hadhrat Yaqub عليه السلام loved Yusuf عليه السلام and his real brother, Binyamin very much because they were younger than their stepbrothers. Their mother had died so they required more care and love. Moreover, Hadhrat Yaqub عليه السلام through divine revelation, had understood that the future of Yusuf عليه السلام was highly resplendent. Beside that, his extraordinary beauty of his face and his character attracted the attention of Hadhrat Yaqub عليه السلام. His stepbrothers were dissatisfied with this behaviour. They thought that it was they who stood in the time of need being a powerful band and were the prop of his old age, while Yusuf عليه السلام and Binyamin were only chidren without expectations. With these ideas in mind they said that, *"Their father was in a great mistake (or manifest error) regarding that affair, and he did not evaluate his profit and loss."*

Question: Why did Yaqub عليه السلام give preference to Yusuf عليه السلام and Binyamin

[41] Genesis (The First Book Of Moses) 37:3- Tafseer Majidi

[42] Antiquities of the Jews: 11.2.1- Tafseer Majidi

[43] The Book Of Jeremiah 246:7 - Tafseer Majidi

whereas it is Allâh's clear order that a father should treat his children equally?

We read in one *Hâdith* a Sahâbi came to our beloved Prophet ﷺ and requested him to be the witness of a gift, which he wanted to give to his son Nu'man. The Prophet ﷺ enquired, *"Do you have any other children?"* He replied, *"Yes."* The Prophet ﷺ enquired, *"Then have you given a similar gift to all of them?"* He said, *"No."* The Prophet ﷺ said, *"Then get someone else to be your witness. Does it not please you that they be equal to you in obedience?"* He said; *"Of course"*. The Prophet ﷺ said, *"Then do not do this."*

Answer: It is quite clear that being a Prophet, Hadhrat Yaqub عليه السلام must have treated them equally with regards to worldly affairs e.g. food, clothing and sustenance, etc. But the matter of love is beyond ones control. The heart is not in one's control; it can be attached or attracted towards one child more than the other. There will be no questioning regarding this. One will only be questioned if he acts accordingly in outward matters by preferring one to the other. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had nine wives at one time. He would treat them equally but his love for some of them was more than the others. This is why he shared things equally, yet he would supplicate in the following words, *"O' Allâh! This is my sharing of what is in my control, so do not reckon me for what is beyond my control."* i.e. the love of the heart. It is the case with children.

Note: It is permissible to give more attention to one child, if there are special reasons for that e.g. he or she is disabled, or poorer than others or he or she is engaged in studying and needs more help. In these cases one is allowed to pay more attention to that particular child.

Verse 9

اُقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ اَوِ اطْرَحُوْهُ اَرْضًا يَّخْلُ لَكُمْ وَجْهُ اَبِيْكُمْ وَ تَكُوْنُوْا

مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ قَوْمًا صٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾

(One said) "Kill Yusuf or cast him away to some land, your father's

favour will then be free for you, and you will thereafter become good fellows."

The fire of malice was burning in their hearts. At last, they counselled that in the presence of Yusuf ﷺ it was not possible to draw the special attention of their father, so Yusuf ﷺ should be finished. Either they should kill him or cast him away in some far distant land from where he could have no return. When Yusuf ﷺ would be away from him, naturally they will be alone entitled to the countenance of their father. Binyamin very probably was not significant in their eyes. His position, they might have thought, was supplementary to Yusuf ﷺ Afterwards, they thought, they would repent of their sins and be pardoned and become pious men.

Some commentators have said that, *"And thereafter become good fellows,"* means that after removing Yusuf ﷺ from their way, all their affairs would be set right, as the countenance of their father would change to them, being disappointed in Yusuf ﷺ

They said the above due to jealousy. How damaging is this bad habit? See what jealousy has done to the household of a great Prophet of Allâh. Hurting the person in connection can never satisfy anyone except the jealous person. This is why Ameer Muâwiya ؓ once said, *"I can please all persons except for the jealous one. Because nothing can please him except the destruction of the favours or bounties from the one towards whom he feels jealous.."*

Allâh ﷻ has especially taught us to seek refuge from the jealousy of the jealous. We read in Sûrah Falaq: *"And (we seek refuge) from the evil of the jealous when he shows jealousy."*

"You will thereafter become good fellows."
Shaytaan is our greatest enemy and the greatest traitor. Here he casts in their minds the thought of committing a major sin on the possibility of becoming virtuous afterwards through repentance.

There is no question regarding the forgiveness of Allâh ﷻ, but two things should

be borne in mind. First the sin of killing is a major sin, the Qur'ân states that killing a Mu'min is a major sin leading to eternal punishment in hell. The *Hâdith* also states that after shirk, murder is the gravest sin.

Secondly, repentance is originally from sins which are committed through forgetfulness, being unmindful and unaware of the consequences of the sin. The Holy Qur'ân says, *"Forgiveness is only incumbent on Allâh towards those who do evil in ignorance (and) then turn quickly (in repentance) to Allâh. These are they towards whom Allâh relenteth. Allâh is Ever All-Knower, All- Wise"*[44].

There are two conditions of accepting repentance mentioned here:
1) 'Do an ill deed in ignorance' - not through evil desires and knowing the grave punishment for that particular sin.
2) 'Repent quickly' - if repentance is not done quickly enough it could have harsh effects on that person. Furthermore, it is not a Mu'min's habit to commit sins in the hope of forgiveness. Therefore, the thought of killing Yusuf ﷺ and then repenting afterwards is very misleading. May Allâh safeguard us all from the evil thoughts put in our minds by the accursed Shaytaan, and may he make us aware of the evil tricks of Shaytaan and may he safeguard us from falling into his traps. Ameen.

Verse 10

قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَاتَقْتُلُوْا يُوْسُفَ وَ اَلْقُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطْهُ
بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾

"One speaker from among them said 'Do not kill Yusuf but, if you must be doing, then fling him into the bottom of a pit; some traveller may pick him up."

The speaker was Juda (Yahuda) who said that killing was a severe thing and

[44] Sûrah Nisâ 17

they could achieve their object without it. If they want to remove him from that place it was advisable that they cast him in some unknown well, far away from their own habitat. Abu Hayyan has quoted some linguists that *'Gayabat ul Jabb'* is a cabin made in the wall of a well just above the surface of the water. In short, they declined to bear the sin of intentional murder. In that case some caravan passing or someone temporarily residing there might take him out of the well and thus their hands would be innocent of bloodshed; the snake shall die and the stick will not break.

Verse 11

قَالُوْا يٰٓاَبَانَا مَا لَكَ لَاتَاْمَنَّا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ وَ اِنَّا لَهٗ لَنٰصِحُوْنَ ﴿۱۱﴾

They said; "O father! Why is it that you do not trust us with Yusuf, whereas we are indeed his sincere well-wishers?"

Having formed the plot, the brothers proceeded and put it into execution. The verse indicates that they had also made such requests before, but Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ was not satisfied and refused to let Yusuf go with them.

Verse 12

اَرْسِلْهُ مَعَنَا غَدًا يَّرْتَعْ وَ يَلْعَبْ وَ اِنَّا لَهٗ لَحٰفِظُوْنَ ﴿۱۲﴾

"Send him with us tomorrow that he may refresh himself (with fruits) and play. Lo! We shall take good care of him."

Allama Uthmani writes, "They made all possible pretensions in persuading their father to send Yusuf ﷺ with them to their pastures. They said that Yusuf ﷺ would become dull at home, and his health would be spoiled if he was not permitted to the outskirts for running, playing and enjoying freely in the climate of jungles. In the open forest atmosphere, Yusuf ﷺ would play freely and eat jungle fruits and would be hale and hearty. It is said that generally their games

and enjoyments in the jungles were archery and racing.

Abu Hayyan has said playing within limits is a source of pleasure and exercise for children, and the brothers made vehement requests and promised full protection. Thus Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ was forced to send Yusuf with them. Commentators have written that they had also enticed Yusuf ﷺ separately to recreation and outing.

Verse 13

قَالَ اِنِّیْ لَیَحْزُنُنِیْٓ اَنْ تَذْهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَ اَخَافُ اَنْ یَّاْكُلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَ اَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿۱۳﴾

He said, "Verily it grieves me that you should take him away and I fear lest a wolf may eat him while you are heedless of him."

Hadhrat Yaqub ﷺ said to them that the very idea of his separation from Yusuf grieved him. Besides, Yusuf was a boy and the fear of a carnivore beast like wolf was painful. It is said that wolves were frequently found in that jungle.[45]

Maulana Abdul Majid Daryabadi rahmatullahi alaihi writes, *"Though now comparatively rare, in ancient Palestine, wolves were amongst the most prominent wild animals."*

Mufti Shafi sahib states, "Yaqub ﷺ had seen a dream that he himself was on a mountain and Yusuf ﷺ was in the valley. Suddenly ten wolves surrounded Yusuf and tried to attack him. One of the wolves defended Yusuf and saved him. Thereafter Yusuf disappeared into the Earth - the interpretation came to be that the ten wolves were the ten brothers and the wolf that defended him was Yahuda the eldest brother, and being thrown in the well was the disappearance."

[45] Uthmani 1049:2

Ibn Abbas has said that due to the dream, Yaqub ﷺ feared from his sons, but did not disclose the full interpretation.

Yaqub ﷺ had his fears, but how could he put them off their intentions? If they were driven to open hostility they may cause him harm. He must deal with his sons wisely and cautiously. He pleaded that he was an old man and due to his immense love for Yusuf he would surely miss him and be sad without him. And after all Yusuf ﷺ was a small boy of less than ten years. He was not of an age to play with them. They would be busy in their game while a wolf might come and attack Yusuf ﷺ. In saying this, Yaqub ﷺ unwillingly gave them a clue and they used the same excuse. In other words that which was to happen reflected in his heart beforehand.

Maulana Idrees Khandhalwi writes, "Since the hearts of the Prophets are sound, they can smell the falsehood from what is being said to them. The *Hâdith* says, *'Truth is said with the contentment of the heart whereas lies hold the doubt.'"* Upon hearing their request, Yaqub ﷺ instantly realised the jealousy and wickedness of their plot.

The Sufis derive from here that *Taqdeer* is, after all, victorious over *Tadbeer*. The strong feeling of Yaqub ﷺ and both his excuses were unable to stop the separation of Yusuf ﷺ. Yaqub ﷺ was compelled to let Yusuf ﷺ go against all his wishes. The Sufis say, *"What value does the will of a servant hold in relation to the will of the Lord."*

Verse 14

قَالُوْا لَئِنْ اَكَلَهُ الذِّئْبُ وَ نَحْنُ عُصْبَةٌ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾

They said, "If the wolf were to devour him despite of our numbers, then surely we are the losers."

They said, "How is it possible that in the presence of such a powerful band like us, a wolf may devour our young brother?" It means we are nothing and we

have lost everything of our character as a strong and powerful group. [46]

Yaqub عليه السلام had mentioned two reasons for not letting Yusuf عليه السلام go with them:
1) His love for Yusuf عليه السلام was such that he would not be able to bear the separation.
2) He had a fear that some wolf may eat him. The brothers rebutted the second objection but not the first, because that was the cause of their jealousy.

Verse 15

فَلَمَّا ذَهَبُوْا بِهٖ وَ اَجْمَعُوْآ اَنْ يَّجْعَلُوْهُ فِيْ غَيٰبَتِ الْجُبِّ ۚ وَ اَوْحَيْنَآ
اِلَيْهِ لَتُنَبِّئَنَّهُمْ بِاَمْرِهِمْ هٰذَا وَ هُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾

So when they did take him away and they all agreed to throw him down to the bottom of the well; And we hinted to him, "You shall surely tell them of this their affair while they perceive not."

Commentators have related heart rending and poignant stories from the time when Yusuf عليه السلام and his brothers went out of sight from Hadhrat Yaqub عليه السلام up to the moment when they cast him into the well. God knows up to what extent they are correct. The Holy Qur'ân, from the viewpoint of its own aim, does not attach much importance to such sentimental details, as they do not serve any sublime motive except emotional presentation to excite the human passion of the reader. The excitement of human passions may be the principle theme of dramas and novels, but it is certainly not the main theme of the divine book. The worldly stories written by the worldly writers generally excite and move people to passionate lamentation. But the Holy Qur'ân aims at the creation of that sensitivity and tender-heartedness in the heart of the audience and readers whose source are *Imân* (belief) and *Irfân* (recognition of the Lord). Common sensitiveness, which is found in the believers and the unbelievers and even in the animals, is not the general appeal of the Holy Qur'ân unlike common orators and writers.

[46] Uthmani 1049:2

Here in this story the Holy Qur'ân has described, omitting the middle events, the last thing, that the brethren of Yusuf ﷺ, with all possible pretexts, took away Yusuf ﷺ, from their father and decided to throw him in the well according to their prearranged plan. At the time God had hinted to Yusuf without the others being concious of this, not to worry; one day he would tell them of all their activities and treatment, and that he would be of such a high rank at that time that his brothers would not know him, or due to the lapse of time it would even be difficult for them to recognise him.

How this divine hint or indication came to Yusuf ﷺ - either in dream, or when awake or, through inspiration or through an angel - is a subject which is absent from the Qur'ân. It is said of course, observing the word *Awhayna* that revelation is not confined to the age of forty years and above, because Hadhrat Yusuf ﷺ was a boy at the time.[47]

Allâh ﷻ was with Yusuf ﷺ in all his difficulties, sorrows, and sufferings, as he is with all his servants who put their trust in him. His brothers, betrayed him and left the poor boy, perhaps to die or to be sold into slavery. But he was undaunted. His courage never failed him.

I recall here a story of Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi rahmatullahi alaihi (died 1323 A.H.). When he was only five or six years old, he created a habit of performing his salaah in the masjid. One day he was late, the salaah had started. He had to take water out of the well to perform wudhu. As he pulled the bucket, he accidently slipped and fell inside. On hearing the noise people broke their salaah and ran towards the well. They were really scared. However, Hazrat shouted from inside 'Do not worry, I am safe. I have seated myself inside the bucket.' It is this courage that made Hazrat what he was. One should try and read the biography of Hazrat Gangohi rahmatullahi alaihi named "Tazkiratur-Rashid".

To console Yusuf ﷺ Allâh ﷻ revealed that the day will come when you shall be on a lofty rank and you will inform them of their evil activities towards you and they won't even recognise you.

[47] Uthmani 1050:2